

## M E M O R A N D U M

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES

FROM: JIM HOBART

RE: KEY FINDINGS: OHIO CONSERVATIVE VOTERS CLEAN ENERGY SURVEY

DATE: FEBRUARY 6, 2019

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**Methodology**

*Public Opinion Strategies completed a statewide survey in Ohio. The survey was conducted January 19-22, among 400 conservative voters. The survey included 160 interviews with cell phone respondents and has a margin of error of  $\pm 4.9\%$  in 95 out of 100 cases.*

**Key Findings**

1. ***Over two-thirds of conservative voters in Ohio want a majority of Ohio's electricity to come from renewable sources.***

Voters were asked: If it were up to you, what percent of Ohio's electricity would come from renewable sources like wind and solar power?

Seven-in-ten (70%) of conservative voters said they want 50% or more of Ohio's electricity to come from renewables. The percentage of conservatives advocating for a majority of renewables has steadily increased in the past three years, up ten points from 2016 (60%).

Fully, 84% of conservatives want 25% or more of electricity in Ohio to come from renewables.

	Sept 2016	Dec 2017	Jan 2019
50% or More	60%	66%	70%
25% or More	76%	82%	84%

2. ***More than nine-in-ten conservatives say they are willing to pay more for renewable energy.***

Ninety-one percent (91%) of conservatives say they would be willing to pay more per month for electricity if renewable energy did cost more, with 85% saying they would pay an additional one dollar or more per month.

Conservatives across income levels are willing to pay more for renewable energy. Voters with a household income below \$40,000 are equally willing to pay more than those with a household income over \$100,000 (88%).

3. ***Clean energy is a positive issue for candidates in Ohio.***

Conservative voters are more likely to support a state legislator or a governor who backs legislation for increased energy efficiency and renewable energy in the state. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of respondents say they are more likely to support a politician who voted for/supported energy efficiency legislation. Clean energy is a political win for candidates up and down the ballot.

4. ***Ohio conservatives have very positive feelings about energy efficiency and natural gas.***

When asked to rate their feelings toward energy sources on a scale of zero to one hundred, with zero being very unfavorable, 100 as very favorable, and 50 as neutral, conservatives rate energy efficiency and natural gas at the top, with a mean feeling of 79.8 and 77.5 respectively. Nearly one-quarter (24%) rate energy efficiency at 100, and 21% of conservatives give natural gas a 100 rating.

Solar and wind energy are not far behind in favorability among conservatives. Sixteen percent (16%) of conservatives give solar energy a 100 rating, with a mean rating of 70.2 and 13% rate wind at 100, with a mean of 63.7.

Sources Ranked by %100	%100	Mean
Energy Efficiency	24%	79.8
Natural Gas	21%	77.5
Solar Energy	16%	70.2
Wind Energy	13%	63.7
Coal	11%	64.3
Nuclear Power	7%	55.9
All of the Above Energy Policies	4%	62.4
Electric Vehicles	4%	49.3

5. ***Voters support establishing reasonable set-back distances from residences for wind projects.***

Conservative Ohioans overwhelmingly support set-back distances of a quarter of a mile from residences for wind projects. There was slightly more support (75%) to establish these distances to protect individual land owner's rights to lease their land for wind projects, with 39% of voters strongly supporting this policy.

The set-back policy clearly resonates, as over two-thirds (68%) also supported set-back distances for the purpose of allowing wind energy investment to occur in rural Ohio, with 29% strongly supportive.

6. ***Conservatives overwhelmingly support a policy proposal that would allow utility customers who generate their own power to be compensated.***

Eighty-two percent (82%) of conservatives support a policy allowing utility customers who generate their own power through solar panels to be compensated for generating more power than they can use.

Intensity is very strong, with over half (54%) of conservative voters strongly supporting the proposal. Just 15% are opposed. Conservatives want to encourage the use of renewables and reward those who are successful at generating clean energy.

**The Bottom Line**

Conservative voters in Ohio are strongly supportive of renewable energy in the state, with a vast majority wanting fifty percent or more of their energy to come from renewable sources.

Ohio conservatives say they would be willing to pay more each month if the use of renewables increased their electricity bill. There is strong support among conservatives for allowing customers who use solar panels to be compensated for the excess power they generate.

Renewable energy is a winning issue in Ohio with conservatives and can help candidates for political office gain momentum in the state.